

# Department of Justice Reissues Guidances to Law Enforcement and Schools on Hate Crimes

## *New Anti-Bullying Video Directed To Students Also Released for New School Year*

Delaware Attorney General Matt Denn reiterated Friday the Delaware Department of Justice's position that "Threats and intimidation against our neighbors based on who they are will not be accepted here in Delaware," and reissued enforcement guidelines from last November to schools and law enforcement on responses to hate speech. Attorney General Denn also released a new video aimed at returning school students about bullying and mutual respect.

Attorney General Denn's legal guidance to Delaware law enforcement agencies focuses on criminal statutes that may relate to charges involving "threats and epithets directed at minority groups." The memo includes discussion of terroristic threatening, disorderly conduct and application of Delaware's hate crime statute.

The law enforcement memo can be found at <https://news.delaware.gov/files/2016/11/Law-Enforcement-Guidelines.pdf>.

In the short video directed to students, which will be distributed to schools through the state Department of Education, Attorney General Denn tells students, "Delaware has a law against school bullying, and it prohibits saying or writing things that a reasonable person would know could create a hostile, or threatening or humiliating educational environment for another student. And it's not just limited to

the school building. Things that you post on social media that you know are likely to be seen by other students in your school can also be considered bullying in Delaware if they have an impact in school.”

The video is available at <http://attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/anti-bullying-efforts/> and the Attorney General urges anyone to share it in ways that will help it be seen by Delaware school students.

Attorney General Denn will also be reissuing guidance to schools that he first sent in November 2016, during an uptick in hate speech incidents around the country. The letter echoes the video in reminding that “Delaware public schools have the authority to prevent and punish hateful speech directed at students if that speech is potentially disruptive of school activities, even if that speech originates off campus” and that “every school district and charter school in Delaware is required to have a policy that prohibits school bullying.”

The previous guidance issued to schools late last year can be found at <https://news.delaware.gov/files/2016/11/School-Guidelines.pdf>.

“It is critical that our children understand the importance of treating each other with respect and kindness, and that our school officials and law enforcement agencies are aware of all the tools at their disposal to deal with hate speech when it occurs. We hope that the materials we are sending to schools and law enforcement agencies advance these goals,” Attorney General Denn said Friday.

Denn said that any Delawareans who believed that they were victims of threats or intimidation based on their personal characteristics and were not receiving an appropriate response from law enforcement or school authorities could contact the Department of Justice Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust at 302-577-5400.